

IN THE DRAWINGS

Please cancel sheet 1 of the formal patent drawings filed with the application.

Please substitute the enclosed REPLACEMENT SHEET, which is also sheet 1 of the drawings, as filed.

REMARKS

Applicants and the undersigned have carefully reviewed the first Office Action of May 3, 2005 in the subject U.S. patent application, together with the prior art cited and relied on by the Examiner in the rejections of the claims. In response, the specification, drawings and claims of the application, as filed, have all been amended. It is believed that the claims now pending in the application are patentable over the prior art cited and relied on, taken either singly or in combination. Reexamination and reconsideration of the application, and allowance of the claims is respectfully requested.

In the first Office Action of May 3, 2005 the drawings were objected to as failing to show reference numeral 30 and its associated lead line. There is submitted herewith a REPLACEMENT SHEET of sheet 1 of the drawings filed with the application. It has been amended to include the inadvertently omitted reference numeral 30 and its associated lead line. It is believed that this correction overcomes the objection to the drawings and that it does not add any new matter.

The specification of the application, as filed, was objected to as having several typographical errors. The specification has been reviewed. The errors noted by the Examiner, whose careful review of the specification is appreciated, have been corrected. Several other minor typographical errors have also been noted, and are corrected by the proposed replacement paragraphs. None of these changes constitutes any new matter.

Claims 1 and 6 were objected to as having several minor typographical errors. The minor spelling errors in each of these two claims have been corrected. Another minor typographical error in claim 9 has also been corrected. It is believed that these

several corrections overcome the objections to these claims.

Claims 1-5 and 19 were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. patent No. 5,361,911 to Waites. Claims 15 and 16 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Waites in view of U.S. patent No. 6,206,200 to Gilles. Claim 20 was rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Waites. Claims 6-14 were objected to as depending from a rejected base claim. They were indicated as being allowable if placed in independent form.

The indication of the allowability of claims 6-14 is noted with appreciation. Claims 7 and 12 have both been rewritten in independent form and including all of the limitations of claim 1, as filed, from which they each depend. It is believed that independent claims 7 and 12 are now in condition for allowance. Claims 8 and 9 depend from currently amended claim 7 and are believed to be allowable. The other ones of these indicated allowable claims depend from believed allowable, currently amended claim 1. They are also believed to now be in condition for allowance.

Claim 1 has been amended. It is believed that claim 1, as filed and even more clearly as amended, is neither anticipated by, nor rendered obvious over the prior art Waites patent. Claim 1 is directed to a screen panel retainer system. A plurality of retainer bars, generally at 22, as seen in Figs. 1, 2, 3 and 5, are formed of a resilient material and each has an upper face 60 and a lower face 62. A plurality of resilient plugs 72 extend down from the lower face 62. These resilient plugs 72 are integral with the lower face of the retainer bar and are made of the same resilient material. Each of these resilient plugs includes means for reversibly increasing a radial dimension of the plug. A plurality of upwardly extending ears 100 are located on the upper face of the

retainer bars. Screen edge strips, which are depicted most clearly at 24 in Fig. 3 receive these ears 100. These screen edge strips 24 are adapted to be secured to screen panels, such as the panel 28 depicted in Fig. 3. Each of these screen edge strips 24 has a plurality of spaced, individual pockets 160 on one of its edges. These pockets are each configured to receive one of the ears that extend upwardly from the retainer bar 22. Dams, as seen at 26, are securable to the screen edge panels.

In the prior art patent No. 5,361,911 to Waites, there is shown a screen panel attachment system. While both the Waites device and the present invention are intended for use in the attachment of screen panels to a deck of a vibratory separating machine, that is where the similarity between the two ends. In Waites, a plurality of elongated locking strips 14 are bolted to an underlying C-shaped channel 22 by bolts 34. That channel, as seen in Fig. 3, has spaced holes 46, as seen in Fig. 6, that receive the bolts 34. The channel 22a is C-shaped because the bottom must be open to afford access to the threaded shanks of the bolts 34. This is to allow the use of a nut 48 to secure the locking strip 14 to the top of the C-shaped channel 22a.

In the subject device, as recited in claim 1, the retainer bars are made of a resilient material. There is no specific recitation of the material used in Waites. The cross-hatching seems to indicate metal. In claim 1, there are recited a plurality of spaced, resilient plugs that are integral with the retainer bars and which are made of the same material. The bolts 34 of Waites are clearly not integral with the locking strip 14 and do not appear to be resilient. These bolts 34 receive nuts 48 which are used to secure the locking strips 14 to the C-shaped channel 22.

Claim 1 further recites that these resilient plugs have means for reversibly

increasing their radial dimension. This can be seen most clearly by reviewing Figs. 6 and 7. In the Office Action, it is asserted that bolts 34, which are characterized as spaced plugs, can be radially increased in size. This is asserted as being accomplished by movement of the “expansion” nut 48. It is recited that this will result in an axial shortening of the bolt 34 and a coincident radial widening. This assertion is clearly incorrect. The bolt 34 is of a fixed length. It is neither shortened axially nor expanded radially by any movement of the nut 48, which is not an “expansion” nut along its threaded shank.

Claim 1, as filed, and as currently amended, recites a plurality of spaced, upwardly extending ears on the upper face of each retainer bar. These are shown at 100. In the Waites patent, each locking strip 14 has one continuous elongated projection 36. What are identified in the Office Action as ears 42 are, in fact, a pair of shoulders on the continuous, elongated projections 36.

Claim 1 recites screen edge strips generally at 24, which are adapted to be secured to screen panels. The corresponding elements in the Waites device are the panel edgings 26, as seen in Fig. 6 of Waites. Claim 1 recites that the screen edge strips 24 are each provided with a plurality of spaced, individual pockets which receive the upwardly extending ears. The Office Action asserts that there are a plurality of pockets 68 on the screen edge strips, which are recited as being provided at 22, in Waites. In fact, the pocket 68 in Waites is formed in the lower surface of the elongated wear pads 16 which are placed above the panel edging 26 when the Waites device is assembled. As may be seen in Fig. 2 of Waites, the screen edgings 26 are held in channels defined by the cooperation of the locking strips 14, the elongated wear panels

16 and the projection portion 36 of the locking strip 16.

Claim 1, as filed, and as amended, recites dams that are securable to the ends of adjacent ones of the screen edge strips. These dams are shown at 26 in the subject application. In the Waites reference, a dam joint 18 is integral with the wear pads 16. This dam joint 18 engages a dam 82 which is held, by the dam joint 18, above the panel edging strips 26 of Waites.

It is clear from a thorough analysis of the Waites patent that it does not anticipate, or render obvious the structure of the subject invention, as recited in claim 1, as filed, and even more clearly as amended. The features recited in the dependent claims included with the rejection of claim 1 further define the subject invention. Since claim 1, as currently pending, is believed to be allowable, these claims are also believed to be allowable.

With respect to claims 15 and 16, the secondary reference to Gilles does not provide the teachings of the present invention which are missing from the Waites reference. In Gilles, there are shown a plurality of locking pins 32 which are receivable in sleeve members 30 that are placed in holes 14 in the C-shaped channel elements 12. The pins pass through semi-cylindrical passages that are formed in screen panel edges. The inclusion of the Gilles teachings in the Waites reference would not result in a structure that is similar to the claimed invention.

The several additional patents cited by the Examiner in the first Office Action, but not applied against the claims, have been reviewed. Since they were not relied on in the rejections of the claims, no further discussion thereof is believed to be required.

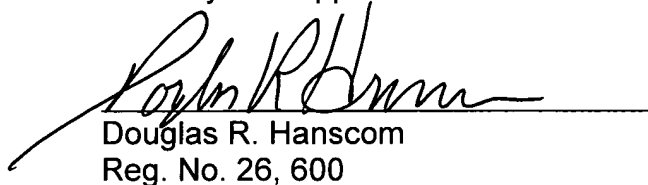
SUMMARY

Several paragraphs of the specification of the application, as filed, have been amended to correct minor typographical errors. Sheet 1 of the drawings has been corrected to add an omitted reference numeral. These minor changes do not constitute any new matter. Claims 1, 6, 7, 9 and 12 have been amended. Claim 3 has been cancelled. Claims 2, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11 and 13-20 have been carried forward. It is believed that all of the claims now pending in the subject patent application are patentable over the prior art references cited and relied on, taken either singly or in combination. Allowance of the claims, and passage of the application to issue is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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